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## A MEDITATION ON LIFE FOR THE NEW YEAR

It was at Christmas time last year that Mr. Kim Dae-Jung was released and went to the United States with his family. His release was a meaningful Christmas present to concerned persons worldwide, as well as to us, Christians in Japan.

Since being kidnapped from a hotel in Tokyo 10 years ago at the hands of the Korean CIA, Mr. Kim has looked death in the face twice. With Catholic friends and many citizens' groups, we in Japan organized various emergency actions to "Save Kim Dae-Jung," while at the same time thinking of the meaning of life in politics.

Basically, I think, there are two paths in politics; one is the way to life, the other to death. The former is the politics in which people who are in distress support each other in order to establish a society where suppression of others is non-existent. In this effort people sacrifice themselves to establish good in society. Mr. Kim chose this way. He sacrificed himself for the purpose of good; and because the power which takes the latter way is strongly working in the field of politics, he faced death.

The way to death was brought to light in the Kwangju Incident in 1980. This type of politics, with a handful of men monopolizing power and wealth and oppressing criticism with violence, ultimately leads others and themselves to death. However, even after the Incident, the voices of the Kwangju citizens and other Koreans who seek freedom and justice never abated but grew stronger, eventually resulting in the release of Kim Dae-Jung and 47 other political prisoners. This process was a victory of the power of life, indeed.

This fact represents a great warning to Japan which, by joining hands with dictatorial powers of foreign countries, has tried to secure its own economic interests and national security. Japan has achieved great economic power on the basis of the suffering and distress of other Asian people. Japan now wants to increase its armaments using that power. This is the way to feed destruction to others and to Japan itself in turn.

For Japan and for the world, there has been no time when God's commandment in

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A Happy Year  
of  
Wild Boar!



NATIONAL CHRISTIAN COUNCIL Room 24, 2-3-18 Nishiwaseda, Shinjuku-ku, Tokyo 160 Japan

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Deuteronomy 30:19 has had such great meaning as it does today:

*"I offer you the choice of life or death, blessing or curse; choose life...."*

We must choose the way to life in all our political decisions.

SHOJI Tsutomu

#### FROM A PHILIPPINE PRISON CELL

*Recently oppression by the Philippine Government of the churches and labor union has been increasing. The following letter has reached JCAN.*

Thank you so much for your letter. Due to our indefinite fasting-hunger strike protest which ended just last December 24th, 1982, I was not in a position to write. I was then so frail and weak. Here is some of the information you wished to know about me.

I am the eldest among the children of my parents. My parents, younger sisters and brothers are in the provinces. I am the sole-breadwinner of the family, and due to my imprisonment since February, our family is really hard up. My younger sisters and brothers who are still studying are greatly affected so they must have to stop schooling.

Since 1977, I've been employed as a machine operator at the Philips Wire and Cable Corporation. I was a member of the workers' union at the factory. The union of workers at the factory was a legal organization in bargaining and settling problems between management and workers. Aside from this legal job as a machine operator and being an active union member at the company where I was employed, no other organization interested me.

According to the authorities I am a subversive. First, let me elaborate the fact about my arrest. February 26, 1982, I dropped by the house of Edwin Tulalian my co-worker and treasurer of our union at the Philips Wire and Cable Corporation, to ask him why he was not able to report to work. Unfortunately there were already military officers at the house.

The military called me and forcefully forced me inside the house. They were armed with rifles so all I could do was to obey them. That was the beginning of my illegal arrest, torture and prolonged detention. There was no arrest warrant for me or even for those who were also arrested at that place, like Mr. Alfredo L. Mansos also my co-worker and our union president. Mr. Mansos had gone to that house to get money from Edwin, since he holds the union funds. Mr. Mansos was also arrested illegally and tortured, and until now he is here with me in Bicutan prison together with Edwin.

As of now, we are wondering why the military and the government are keeping us in prison. We are victims of this unjust long period of imprisonment. But we are aware that the military and the government are on the side of the businessmen like the owner of Philips Wire and Cable Corporation who is so cruel and unfair to workers. and Mr. Tulalian were actively working on labor cases against the management, by putting us in prison perhaps they could silence and harrass the workers in general. Actually the authorities claim that we are subversives. We are not subversive. They accused us of subversion at the civil court after we had been tortured and kept isolated in prison for two months before we were presented to the court.

For almost two weeks, day and night I was blindfolded. Unseen military personnel kept punching, kicking, slapping, and punishing all parts of my body. Everyday and night this happened. Some of my co-prisoners were even subjected to electric shocks. We were not given food suited for human beings. (This torture case was rejected by Philippine courts, so we've filed it at the U.N. and by February there should be scheduled a first hearing.)

In the Philippines we are really deeply oppressed politically and economically. Warrants of arrest are no longer subjected to proper investigations and issuance by judges in court. They are issued by the "dictator-president Marcos" who issued the Presidential commitment order (PCO) last March 9, 1982 for our illegal arrest  
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last February 27, 1982. Because of this only Marcos could free us, all political prisoners now in detention. Not only are we workers badly oppressed; farmers, student, fishermen, teachers, vendors, drivers, and just recently religious workers, priests and nuns, were subjected to injustices.

Mr. Mansos's wife and little child are living miserably like refugees. Financially his family is in trouble, no home for the mother and child. We hope for your kind assistance for us all victims of injustices and human right violations. In advance, we the political prisoners of the Philippines do express our utmost thanks and gratitude for the "NCCJ-concernness" to us all.

Mr. Nestor R. Bodino

#### MISSION IN A TOKYO SLUM

What motivated me to work in Sanya? During seven months in the Philippines I had a chance to know the people who were most exploited by oppressive ruling government in collaboration with the socio-economic systems of the advanced nations. I could not close my eyes to those people, and they gave me power to serve among those who were left alone without any benefit from the development, for I felt that the suffering Christ was present among those brothers and sisters.

Soon after I came back to Tokyo I visited the Sanya slum which is an area of 1.66 square kilometers located between Daito and Arakawa Wards. Presently about 7,000 day laborers are living in temporary housing. There are more than 15,000 day laborers living in this area, 99% of them single men. Their average wage is ¥7,000 a day of which they pay ¥900 for lodging and ¥1,500 to ¥2,000 for food. There is no guarantee that they will have a job every day, and usually a man can expect only one job every 3 to 4 days. Not only must they fear sickness or injury, but also they suffer from social prejudice which does not regard them as human beings.

Why Are There such Day Laborers? Some people say a farming protection law enacted in 1960

was to enable large businesses to seek the necessary laborers from among farmers for the development of industries. While the large farmers were protected by the law, the small farmers who did not receive any benefit from the law were forced to move to urban situations. In fact, there were 16 million farmers in 1950 but 20 years later there were only nine million. This means seven million sought work in cities. Some of them in Sanya may be criminals or have some degree of mental handicap, that is, those are who are not able to adjust to the ordinary social system. For various reasons they are looked down upon and segregated from the rest of the public. In reality the bases of the present society were supported by them but when the depression came, they were the first ones to be sacrificed.

The Condition: About 1,000 of the people in the Sanya slum are over 60 years old and receive some kind of social welfare assistance. Without any friends many are lying in tiny shacks. The "Royu kai" (Old Friendship Association), formed in 1974 by volunteers for people in Sanya who are 60 years old or older, presently has about 110 members, the oldest being 92 years old. They come to a small meeting room for fellowship, and go on field trips together. Every Friday morning the group goes around the area to pick up empty cans in Sanya. Volunteers make suppers for them. From last year I have participated in the supper making group and enjoy listening to them talk while we eat together.

I know our work does not solve their problems nor bring a change in society. But I know that they worked hard at the bottom of society. While I join them and am with them, I hope they at least feel that they are being treated as human beings. I want them to enjoy the basic human rights which are guaranteed for any person.

Sister Kusakabe  
Mercedarian Missionaries  
of Berroz



## LOVE, OUT OF THE ABYSS

Mr. HOSHINO Tomihiro is a Christian artist and poet who lives in the mountains in Gumma Prefecture. Paralyzed from the neck down in an accident in 1971, he does all of his work with a pen held in his mouth. For this reason, people are first drawn to him out of curiosity. However, after they see his pictures of flowers and read his poems, his handicap becomes secondary.

During nine years in the hospital, Mr. Hoshino had to come to grips with the reality of his paralysis, as well as the dark side of his personality (a side which all of us have but which we usually manage to ignore merely because we are physically able to become involved in so many different activities). Finally he found God, the loving Father with a purpose and a plan for each one of His children.

I first heard about Mr. Hoshino in a school chapel talk. Then, when I heard how his books had impressed several of my high school students I decided to read one, Ai Fukaki Fuchi Yori. I found that he has a gift of clear, simple expression and that the book reads easily. Later I was able to attend an exhibit of his pictures held here in Maebashi.

What surprised me was that, far from sounding like a saint who has conquered all spiritual weaknesses, Mr. Hoshino is a human being struggling with problems common to all of us. Most importantly, his book is full of joy. Rather than dwelling on his innumerable hardships, he gives delightful accounts of events, people, and thoughts that brought him out of his own despair. All of these give us hints on how to find happiness in our own lives.

Here are a few of his poems which have been translated into English:

*An azalea bloomed in the hospital garden.  
Looking as if she were about to rob  
a bank  
My mother timidly tiptoed out and  
broke off a branch.  
I showed my painting of it to the man  
in the next bed who said  
"Now that's a real nice lily."*

*If God would move these arms just once  
I'd be given the honor of massaging  
my mother's shoulders.  
Watching the flowers of the frail  
Shepherd's Purse Swaying in the wind  
I have a feeling that day may really  
come.*

*Trees cannot move around  
From the place allotted by God  
They root firmly  
And try earnestly  
To reach the height allowed for them  
to grow*

*Trees are my friends.*

*My friend pushed my wheelchair outside  
Under a cherry tree  
And bent down the branch so that  
My face was buried in the blossoms  
Overwhelmed by joy I  
Began to eat the flowers  
Blooming around my mouth*

(Ai Fukaki Fuchi Yori, and Kaze no Tabi, a collection of Hoshino's pictures, poems and essays, are published by Rippu Shobo and are priced at ¥700 and ¥1,000 respectively.)

Deborah IWABUCHI

## DIVINE DARK CAVE CHRISTIAN-ZEN MEDITATION

Cold, tired and with terrible pain in my legs would be the best way to describe a four day retreat that I participated in in the month of November. One may wonder what I may have been doing to be at times so miserable. Was it some type of sports training camp or perhaps it was that the retreat center had a poor heating system and no chairs. Well, the retreat center had an excellent heating system in each room. As for chairs, they were quite unnecessary, even though we were sitting 9 hours a day and trying to "listen" to a nearby river as our group leader had directed us. This retreat was the quiet, contemplative life of a Catholic-Zen Sesshin (formalized group practice of zazen.)

Founded 12 years ago by Fr. Enomiya LaSalle, Shin Me Futsu (Catholic Zen



Center) is located in the mountains near Itsukaichi. Quiet and serene, this background offers the individual an opportunity to meditate upon the wonders of God's creation. The sesshin I attended was led by Fr. K. Kadowaki, S.J. of Sophia University. The other participants were from many different backgrounds and experiences--university students, priests and sisters, as well as teachers, to name just a few.

According to Fr. Kadowaki the main concern of the particular style of meditative practice used at Shin Me Kutsu is to integrate Christian Spirituality with the Zen Spirit. At Shin Me Kutsu, the techniques of Zazen are utilized but always in the context of the ideas and spirituality of the Christian faith. (Fr. Kadowaki has explained his ideas and his experiences in his work Zen and the Bible, Roughledge & Keagen publishers.)

The daily routine of Shin Me Kutsu began at 5:00 in the morning. With the clang of the morning bell down the long halls of the retreat center, we were given 15 minutes to prepare for a day that would last 16 and 1/2 hours. The 25 minute sitting periods were separated by various activities such as lectures, work time, free time, walking Zazen, breathing exercises and meals. As the atmosphere of Shin Me Kutsu was one of silence, our meals were eaten with no dinner time discussion. Because of the heightened sense of awareness that was a result of Zazen practice, the boiled vegetables and rice were a delight to the palate. Also, with the senses more alert, the sound of a passing bird, the smell of pine or the ever present rush of the river brought forth a warmth of heart and mind. Yet during the sitting periods, I must admit a sense of frustration due to the ever constant noise that my mind produced. Because of this I could not find the complete quietness that is necessary for deep contemplation. Hence during my three days of sitting I was only able to scratch the surface of the Zazen experience. However what I began to learn at Shin Me Kutsu is that there is a depth to each of us, a background to our conscious processes. Through 3 1/2 days of sitting, I was given the

opportunity to examine my own mental processes which resulted in the initial perception of the existence of a greater self, of something much more profound. To this discovery the meaning of the name Shin Me Kutsu is most appropriate, that of Divine Dark Cave.

Keith SERA

## SALT OF THE EARTH RURAL MISSION IN JAPAN

In last November 1982, I went to Tottori city to attend the annual conference of the Eastern district of Tottori Prefecture in the Higashi Chugoku-Kyoku of the Kyodan. Tottori city, 4 hours from Haneda Airport by airplane, is a quiet historical city with weather that is harsh in the winter with snow and wind.

On the morning of the 21st of November, about 300 people from seven churches gathered together at the conference for Sunday service. With 7 churches participating this might seem a small number, but some of these churches have a regular Sunday attendance of less than 10 people. Therefore, all those who regularly attend the churches were also present for this conference. The fellowship of the churches in this district is very strong and mutually supportive.

As the title of the conference was Blessed Are Those Who Are Peace Makers, I preached in the morning on peace and in the afternoon I presented a lecture about the task of Christians for peace in this age. Because the area of Tottori prefecture is politically and socially conservative the religious perspective of the Tottori Christians tends to be conventional. However, at the conference there were some Christians who were keenly aware of their task as being the salt of the earth. It was through the input of these individuals that the conference theme was established. The following points are discoveries which I found concerning the role of those who are the salt of the earth.

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A member of Koyama Church who is a farmer raised a question about the condition of the forests of Asian countries where Japanese companies obtain their wood products. His primary concern was for the beautiful pine trees in the Tottori area which are gradually becoming withered and brown due to the carelessness of the owners, who only consider economic factors and not the beauty that the pines give to the Tottori area. As this farmer was concerned about the Tottori pines, his concern extended to include the forests of other countries. This concern by Japanese farmers for their neighbors in the Asia area is very significant because it is based on their daily concerns as farmers.

Indeed, on the basis of these concerns Koyama Church has organized a work camp group to go to the Ponape Islands in the South Pacific where Rev. Y. Arakawa, a missionary in Ponape, has been carrying on an agricultural mission. The young men from several churches of Tottori eastern district have joined the work camp every year. Last year, Rev. O. Miura of Koyama Church was the leader of the work camp. This is a very important channel for the churches in Tottori in order to develop their concern for their Asian-Pacific neighbors.

Koyama Church is also the base for a group which is concerned about the nuclear power plant issue. In Aoya-machi there is a plan for an electric company to establish a nuclear power plant, although it has not officially been publicized. Ministers and lay people of Koyama, Aoya and Mochigase Churches organized a protest group against the planned nuclear power plant. Although the churches are very small their organization represents a core group around which other citizens can form. This type of involvement is again the salt of the earth. When some anti-nuclear activist people outside the prefecture stayed at Aoya Church, plainclothes police personnel kept the church under surveillance, but minister Terhune had no hesitation in continuing to show his concern about the planned plant.

Mochigase Church is a center for a consumers' movement. The minister of Mochigase Church, Rev. O. Hasegawa, told me that the church library established the first and largest collection of consumer information materials in Tottori Prefecture. The church has regular meetings with the housewives in the town to let them know about and discuss ecological matters, the safety of their food, organic farming, and any other issue which is connected with the consumer movement.

Rev. Hasegawa's idea of church has not been confined to the church itself but rather has extended itself through services to the community. The church building, in fact, was built by the young people of the community, many of whom are not members of the church. This is a communicating church, one which is willing to reach out to the people in the community.

These are some examples of the various roles of those who are the salt of the earth. In many places the local churches in the rural areas are now assuming these tasks which are the real bases of the rural mission of churches in Japan.

SHOJI Tsutomu

## FEBRUARY 11TH PROTESTED

*The following letter was written by the Special Committee on the Yasukuni Shrine Problem of the NCC-J (OOSIMA Koiti, Chairman) and sent to Ambassadors and Official Representatives of Foreign Countries.*

We have heard that official representative of foreign governments are being invited to attend a government-supported assembly on February 11th, to celebrate Japan's foundation as a nation. It is said that there is a strong possibility of participation by Japanese government officials, and that the assembly will be held in the National Theatre. If you receive such an invitation we would like you to be aware of the problems related to this ceremony.

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the observation of a "National Foundation Day" was first proposed in the National Diet in 1957. For ten years it failed to gain a consensus because opinion was divided. It is an attempt to justify militarism and whitewash Japan's responsibility in World War II. Furthermore it is an opening gambit toward the revival of militarism today, an unpermissible breach of the principles of Japan's constitution.

The use of February 11th as "National Foundation Day" is an attempt to politically manipulate the mythology concerning the former "Kigen Setsu," which was promulgated in 1889 by the Imperial Constitution in the name of the emperor. The present "National Foundation Day" is directly contrary to the principles of anti-militarism, democracy, peace, and human rights incorporated in the present constitution. We also recall that February 11th was the central date for the Japanese attack on Singapore in World War II.

Though the present "National Foundation Day" began in 1967, it was not until 1978 that the central government began to support a people's ceremony, and not until 1981 that the Ministry of Education became involved. We fear that these steps are leading to official government sponsorship of "National Foundation Day" ceremonies.

Those who oppose Japan's remilitarization and are active in promoting peace and democracy see this government-supported February 11th celebration as a symbolic barometer indicating how far Japan has already gone in reviving militarism. We ask you to give serious consideration to the following points if you do receive an invitation.

1) This government support program does not really represent the opinion of the Japanese people.

2) According to the printed program from last year there was facing toward the Iwashiro Shrine to worship, shouting "Long Live the Emperor," singing the "Kimigayo," etc. all of which have religious content. The whole program was organized by people who have nostalgic feelings toward the pre-war emperor

system and its ultra-nationalism.

3) Your participation in this kind of ceremony will encourage the revival of militarism and discourage the growth of democracy in Japan.

We respectfully request that you give serious consideration to these points.

#### FROM THE JAPANESE PRESS: FREEZING ARMAMENT EXPENSES

In November last year under new Prime-minister NAKASONE Yasuhiro a political administration was formed which advocates increased remilitarization for Japan.

In the post-war Japan remilitarization has not grown rapidly even though pressure from the US has been strong. Three reasons can be pointed out which prevented the rapid growth of militarism.

1) The Japanese people shared the wounds of the military invasions of other Asian countries, war time starvation, and memories of the Hiroshima and Nagasaki. The people's desire for denouncing war crystallized to support Article 9 of the Constitution, the so-called Peace Article.

2) In that political atmosphere it was clear that forceful rearmament would not help the eco-political stabilization of the nation and would negatively affect Japan-US relations.

3) Asian countries which had been sacrificed to Japan's aggression formed a braking force to Japan's militarization.

However, because of the rapid economic growth from 1960 the economic factor became less important and in fact Japan's armed forces, the so-called Defense Force, swelled to rank 8th in the world. With an increasing GNP, the people were blinded to their economic burden for that militarization.

In the 1970s, the diplomatic relations between the USA and China improved and

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China's criticisms against Japan decreased. Thus, the pressure from other Asian countries was also weakened. From the latter part of the 1970s the attempt to reshape the people's consciousness through the issues of the legalization of the "Gengo" (emperor's era) system, emphasis on "Kigen Setsu" (national foundation day), the nationalization of the Yasukuni Shinto Shrine, the enforcement of textbook controls and debates regarding emergency laws, was a steady tactic. In this way, the Japanese people's opposition to rearmament grew weaker and weaker. At the end of the 1970s, using the Northern Islands issue and Russia's invasion of Afghanistan psychological pressures were used to strongly support Japan's remilitarization.

But once the welfare budget was cut and the burden of taxes became apparent, the remilitarization issue again became a real economic matter. In these ways the Japanese peoples anti-war feelings and the economic reasons have again become resurgent. At the same time, other Asian countries' strong opposition to Japan's remilitarization has flared up again because of Japan's textbook revisions. Not only the socialistic countries of China and North Korea, but also the anti-communist countries of South Korea, the Philippines and Indonesia have all opposed the Japanese history textbook changes.

However, the situation now has changed. When the US was ruling the world economy Japan could depend on the US for the cost of armaments. Now, when the economies of the West are facing a crisis, the economic pressures resulting from armaments fall on all people. As far as opposition from other Asian countries is concerned, Japan does not recognize itself as the oppressor of those but interprets Asian voices opposing the textbook issues as "voices of fear from the little countries."

There are many reasons why the advanced nations are facing economic problems, but one is that no government can sustain its political power without guaranteeing the people's welfare. Another

reason is the inappropriate counter measure to the high price of oil. The common ground of these two reasons is that people are demanding equal rights. Ignoring the social changes, both the USA and the USSR are still 20 years behind in their political changes. The present arms race by the super-powers demonstrates their political handicaps.

It is impossible to maintain "a welfare nation" along with a continuous increase in armaments. Initiated by other Asians the Japanese people's memories of the war are coming back. If the armament costs continue to expand, the economic burden will be unescapable. Therefore, we must realize the freezing of armament expenses. The people's movements for anti-nuclear and anti-armament also aim to support the people's right to survive and to live more humanely.

SAKAMOTO Yoshikazu  
(Summary/translation by JCAN  
Asahi Shinbun Jan. 5, 1983)

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#### LATE PRESS REPORT

Press reports indicate that un-named government sources are suggesting that Prime Minister NAKASONE Yasuhiro may become the first prime minister since World War II to attend a national foundation celebration function on Feb. 11.

Before Japan's defeat in 1945, Feb. 11 was Japan's most important national holiday--a holiday for celebrating the traditional ascent to the throne by Emperor Jimmu over 2600 years ago.

Many fear that the Feb. 11 celebrations will again become extremely nationalistic in content.

(See Yasukuni Shrine Committee protest on page 6 of this issue.)

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